Difficulties of Sanskrit *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from Proto-Indo-European **dherebh-* / **dhrebh-*(*so-*): ‘analogical (original) *ps*’?

Dr. Mirushe Hoxha

“Ss. Cyril and Methodius University” (UKIM), Faculty of Philology “Blaze Koneski”, North Macedonia

Abstract

- The second opinion of Mayrhofer (1992, pp. 754-755) on Sanskrit (Skr.) *drapsá-* differs from his first opinion on this word (ibid., 1963, pp. 71-72). In his second etymology, Mayrhofer (1992, ibid.) traces back original meanings of Skr. *drapsá-* to Proto-Indo-European (PIE.) **dreb-* 'to tremble, quiver'; under one condition, Avestan (Av.) *drafša-*, the equivalent of Skr. *drapsá-*, is from PIE. **dreb-* as well (ibid.).
- This marks the scholar's withdrawal of his first opinion on the different meanings of Skr. *drapsá-* from more than one older root, its meaning 'drop' from PIE. **dhrebh-so-* (Mayrhofer, 1963, ibid.). Main references of the old etymology of Mayrhofer (ibid.) are Uhlenbeck's (1898/1899, p. 131) reconstructed **dhrabzha-*, and Pokorny's (1959, p. 257) PIE. **dherebh-* 'to harden'.

Abstract

Keywords: etymology, *drapsá-*, **dherebh-*, **dhrebh-so-*, **dhrabzha-*, ‘analogical (original) *ps*’, **drep-*, **dreb-*, *drafša-*.

- The present study aims to illuminate an issue that is missing from the debates: meaning ‘drop’ of Skr. *drapsá-* from PIE. **dherebh-* / **dhrebh-so-* / **dhrabzha-* results with the origin of its cluster *-ps-* from an ‘analogical original *ps*’ alternating with ‘analogical *ps*’, while the ‘analogical (original) *ps*’ in Skr. *drapsá-* contradicts the most attested meaning of this word, viz. ‘drop’.
- Unfortunately, we still prefer to refer to the old etymology of Pokorny (ibid., 257; 211); consequently, etymology of Av. *drafša-* (Middle Persian *drafš,* New Persian *derafš*) remains rather floating. Arguments on the doubtfulness of ‘analogical (original) *ps*’ in Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ serve also as an introduction to the plausibility of Av. *drafša-* and Skr. *drapsá-* from PIE. **dreb-* (developed from **der-*3 ‘to run’) + **-s-*, as opposed to their equally doubtful origin from PIE. **drep-* (-p- formant of **der-*4 ‘to cut’) + **-s-*.

1. Introduction

- According to Pokorny (Pok.) (*IEW* I [1959], p. 211; 257), different meanings of “Skr. *drapsá-ḥ*” are from more than one older root.
- Meaning “banner (?) / Banner (?)” of Skr. *drapsá-*, “banner / Banner” of Av. *drafša-* is from PIE. **drep-* (-*p-* formant of **der-*4) ‘to cut, split, skin / schinden, die Haut abziehen, absplaten, splaten’’ (ibid., p. 211; 206).
- Meaning ‘drop / Tropfen’ of Skr. *drapsá-* is from PIE. **dherebh-* ‘to harden / gerinnen, gerinnen machen, ballen, dickflüssig’ (ibid., p. 257).
- Amongst cognates of Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’: Gr. *τρέφεσθαι, τετροφέναι* ‘curdle, be firm’, *τρόφις* ‘fat, strong, big’, *τροφαλίς, -ίδος* ‘fresh cheese, coagulated milk’ etc. (Pok., ibid., p. 257).

1. Introduction

- The first opinion of Mayrhofer on Skr. *drapsá-* 'drop' is formulated in brackets as follows: "perhaps (**as *_dhrebh-so-_**) [emphasis added] to Gr. *τρέφω* 'coagulated masse' (…)" (ibid., 1963, p. 71), and with references: "WP I 876" (viz. PIE. **dhrebh-*$_2$ 'to harden'); "P[ok]. 257" (viz. PIE. **dherebh-* 'to harden'), and "Wack. II/2 922" (ibid.).
- References of Mayrhofer (ibid.) 'WP I, p. 876' and 'Pok. I, p. 257' point to the etymology of Uhlenbeck (*KEWAS* [1898/1899], pp. 131-132) for Skr. *drapsá-* 'drop'. Uhenbeck's (ibid., p. 131) reconstructed form **dhrabzha-* is implied yet it does not figure in WP I (ibid.), Pok. (ibid.), and Mayrhofer (ibid.).
- Uhlenbeck (ibid.) notes: "Skr. *drapsás* (…) perhaps from ***_dhrabzha-_** from PIE. ***_dhrebh-_**" (p. 132). Meaning of the root **dhrebh-* is absent in Uhlenbeck (ibid.).

1. Introduction

- In sum, Uhlenbeck (ibid.) suggests the **dhrabzha-* from **dhrebh-*, Mayrhofer (ibid.) suggests the **dhrebh-so-* from **dhrebh-* / **dherebh-*, and Pok. (ibid.) suggests the **dherebh-*.
- Uhlenbeck (ibid.), Mayrhofer (ibid.), and Pok. (ibid.) do not elaborate details of the derivation of Skr. *drapsá-* 'drop' from **dhrabzha-* / **dhreb-so-* / **dhrebh-* / **dherebh-*.
- Details of this derivation are related to the origin of cluster *-ps-* for the meaning 'drop' of Skr. *drapsá-*. This origin, which has been omitted from hitherto discussions, appears problematic. As such, it reaffirms the implausibility of Skr. *drapsá-* 'drop' from a PIE. root with final aspirate **-bh-*, as well as Skr. *drapsá-* 'banner' and Av. *drafša-* 'banner' from PIE. **drep-* (evolved from **der-*4) 'to cut'.

We shall proceed as follows:

- Firstly, we shall decipher the origin of cluster -*ps*- of Skr. *drapsá*- ‘drop’ from PIE. root with final aspirate *-*bh*- + *-*s*-, namely, the ‘analogical *ps*’ (2).
- Then we shall explain why in the case of Skr. *drapsá*- ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so*- / **dhrabzha*- / **dherebh*- the origin of its cluster -*ps*- results with an ‘analogical original *ps*’ alternating with ‘analogical *ps*’. This will confront us with the crucial implication of the derivation of Skr. *drapsá*- ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so*- / **dhrabzha*- / **dherebh*-: **Is it plausible to assert that primary meaning of Skr. *drapsá*- is ‘banner’, its secondary meaning ‘drop’ (*sic!*)?** (3).
- The **implausibility** of this **implied assertion** reconfirms that the original meanings of Skr. *drapsá*- and its Av. equivalent *drafša*- are from one certain PIE. root, viz. **dreb*- ‘to tremble, quiver’ (evolved from **der*-3 ‘to run’) + *-*so*- (evolved into -*sa*-); origin of cluster -*ps*- of Skr. *drapsá*- (original meanings) and of cluster -*fš*- of Av. *drafša*- (original meanings) from ‘original *ps*’ (4).
- Finally, we shall summarize the discussed topic (5).

2. Deciphering Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so-* / **dhrabzha-* (**dherebh-*)

2.1 Bartholomae’s Law

- Phoneme *-*a-* and cluster *–*bzh-* in Uhlenbeck’s (ibid.) **dhrabzha-* indicate that **dhrabzha-* belongs to Proto-Indo-Iranian (PIn.Ir.), most probably continuing Indo-Iranian (In.Ir.). In Mayrhofer’s (ibid.) **dhrebh-so-*, the *–so-* should be the ‘original’ desiderative marker, in (P)In.Ir. changed to *–sa-*.
- **dhrebh-so-* fulfills conditions for the activation of the Bartholomae’s Law (BL): in an environment ‘aspirate + *s* (from PIE. **s*) (or another stop)’, the aspirate (in this case, *–bh-*) voices the last element (in this case, the *–s-* of **–so-*); the aspiration goes to the last element where it is preserved in Skr., but lost in Iranian (cf. Beekes, 1988, p. 75). Hoffman-Forssman’s (1996) statement “*-bh-* + *-s-* > PIn.Ir. ****bzh*** (…)” (p. 90) confirms Uhlenbeck’s (ibid.) form **dhra**bzh**a-* (with preserved aspiration in *–zh-*), itself implying Mayrhofer’s (ibid.) **dhrabh-so-*.

2. Deciphering Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so-* / **dhrabzha-* (**dherebh-*)

2.2 Towards ‘analogical (original) *ps*’: instance, Skr. *dipsa-*

- It shall be noted that PIE. -***bhs***- (from *-*bh*- + *-*s*-) gave **GAv**. **-*bž*-**, **Skr**. **–*ps***- (cf. Beekes, ibid.). Example of this change in Skr. is *dipsa-* ‘seek to deceive’. Let us focus briefly on this Skr. instance to retrieve the clear origin of this Skr. cluster *ps*.
- The In.Ir. **dʰabʰ*- ‘to deceive’ had the desiderative stem *di-d****bʰ-s****a*- that gave *di*(*d*)***bžʰa***- out of it Skr. ***dipsa-***, Av. ***diβža-*** ‘seek to deceive’.
- According to Skjaervo (2007), “OInd. *dipsa-*” is obtained “with elimination of *ž*” (p. 64).
- According to Kellnes (1984), cluster -*ps*- of Skr. *dipsa-* is obtained by analogy: “root *dabʰ* ‘deceive’: *di□ža-* < **di(d)□ža-* (by ru[p]ki: **di-db-ža-* < **di-dbʰ* + *sa*. **In OIA** [Skr.], **the group *bž* was replaced by *ps*: *dipsa-*** [emphasis added])” (p. 196).

2. Deciphering Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so-* / **dhrabzha-* (**dherebh-*)

2.2 Clear formulation of Kellens (1984, p. 196) as a ground

- Based on the clear formulation of Kellens (ibid.), it can be concluded that the Skr. distinguishes an ‘analogical *ps*’.
- Kellens (ibid.) does not suggest from which model might have been taken over the ‘analogical *ps*’ in Skr. *dipsa-* ‘seek to deceive’; as far as I am aware, no reference addresses this issue of Skr. *dipsa-*.
- To sum up. Cluster *ps* of Skr. *dipsa-* ‘seek to deceive’ (< *di-dbh-sa-*) and on the other hand cluster *ps* of Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dherebh-* (Pok., ibid.) / **dhrebh-so-* (Mayrhofer, ibid.) / **dhrabzha-* (Uhlenbeck, ibid.) derive from the same environment, viz. -*bh-* + -*so-* / -*sa-*.

3. The ‘analogical original *ps’* / ‘analogical *ps’* in Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so-* / **dhrabzha-* / **dherebh-*: Implications

- PIE. *-bhs-* (from *-bh-* + *-s-*) gave Skr. *ps* (cf. Beekes, ibid.) with replacement of the group *-bž-* (following the group *-bhs-*) with the group *-ps-* (cf. Kellens, ibid.). It follows that cluster *-ps-* of Skr. *drapsá-* from ****dhrabzha-*** (Uhlenbeck, ibid.) from ****dhrebh-so-*** (Mayrhofer, ibid.) / from ****dherebh-*** (Pok., ibid., p. 257) is obtained by **analogical change**:
- PIE. **dherebh-* / **dhrebh-* + **-so-* > **dhrebh-so-* > (P)In.Ir. **dhrabh-sa-* > (P)OInd. **dhrabzha-* > **drabž(ʰ)a-*; then, in OInd. cluster *-bž-* (in **drabž(ʰ)a-*) was replaced by cluster *-ps-* giving the final form *drapsá-* ‘drop’.
- Two implied conclusions result, and in both conclusions a problematic detail that has failed to be noticed is illuminated:

3. The ‘analogical original *ps’* / ‘analogical *ps’* in Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so-* / **dhrabzha-* / **dherebh-*: Implications

- One conclusion is that cluster *-ps-* of Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrabzha-* from **dhrebh-so-* / **dherebh-* (+ **-so-*) **is** traced back to ‘original *ps*’, because it is taken over most probably from the meaning ‘banner’ of Skr. *dra**ps**á-* **itself from ‘original *ps*’ (*-*p*- + *-*s*-)**, by default, from **dre**p**-* (from **der-*4) ‘to cut’ (cf. Pok. ibid., p. 211) + **-**s**-* (from PIE. **s*).
- The other conclusion is that cluster *-ps-* of Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrabzha-* from **dhrebh-so-* / **dherebh-* (+ **-so-*) **is** ‘analogical *ps*’ yet **not** ‘analogical original *ps*’ because the **locus** of ‘originality’ (original ‘first source’) of this Skr. *-ps-* **is not** in **-bzh-* or *–bž-*, but it is most probably **in** the *–ps-* of *drapsá-* ‘banner’ from **(dre)**p**-* (+ **-**s**-*).

3. The ‘analogical original *ps’* / ‘analogical *ps’* in Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so-* / **dhrabzha-* / **dherebh-*: The problematic detail

- If cluster *ps* of the meaning ‘drop’ of Skr. *drapsá-* is from ‘original *ps*’ because it was taken over most probably from cluster *ps* of the meaning ‘banner’ of the same Skr. *drapsá-* itself from ‘original *ps*’ (**dre**p**-* + *-***s***-), then this implies that **firstly has evolved meaning ‘banner’ of Skr. *drapsá-*, secondly meaning ‘drop’ of Skr. *drapsá-*** (*sic!*).
- The most attested meaning of Skr. *drapsá-* is ‘drop, droplet’, this **excluding** any possibility that primary meaning of this word is ‘banner’ (cf. Renou, 1964, p. 103; ibid., 1962, p. 64; Gonda, 1975, p. 243; Geldner, 1951-1957, p. 433; Schwartz, 1989, p. 109; etc.).
- This problematic implication is unavoidable, because firstly must evolve the ‘model’ (= ‘original *ps*’ of the meaning ‘banner’ of *drapsá-*), which is ‘taken over *by* …’ (= ‘analogical original *ps*’ of the meaning ‘drop’ of *drapsá-*). The reverse is impossible.

3. The ‘analogical original *ps*’ / ‘analogical *ps*’ in Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so-* / **dhrabzha-* / **dherebh-*: Crucial implication

- The other implied conclusion, viz. ‘analogical *ps*’ (yet not ‘analogical original *ps*’) in the origin of cluster -*ps*- of Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ due to the locus of originality of this -*ps*- which is not in *-*bzh*- or *-*bž*- but it is in the -*ps*- of the meaning ‘banner’ of Skr. *drapsá-* traced back to ‘original *ps*’ **would have made sense** only if primary meaning of this word is ‘banner’, its secondary meaning ‘drop’.
- Therefrom, the crucial implication of Skr. *drapsá-* ‘drop’ from **dhrabzha-* from **dhrebh-so-* / **dherebh-* (+ *-*so*-) is the answer to the question:
- **Is it plausible to assert that primary meaning of Skr. *drapsá-* is ‘banner’, its secondary meaning ‘drop’**?
- **Answer: It is not plausible.**

4. Skr. *drapsá-* and Av. *drafša-* from PIE. **dreb-* ‘to tremble, quiver’ (evolved from **der-*3 ‘to run’)

- The second opinion of Mayrhofer (*EWA* I [1992], pp. 754-755) on Skr. *drapsá-* differs from his first opinion on this word. Referring to Flattery-Schwartz (1989, pp. 108-109), Mayrhofer (ibid.) withdraws his first opinion on Skr. *drapsá-* from ****dhrebh-so-*** (ibid., *KEWA* II [1963], pp. 71-72).
- According to the second opinion of Mayrhofer (1992, p. 754), original meanings of Skr. *drapsá-* are from one older root, viz. from PIE. **dreb-* ‘to tremble, quiver’ (evolved from **der-*3 ‘to run’) + **-s-* (viz. **dreb-s-* /ibid./).
- Cluster *-ps-* of Skr. *drapsá-* (original meanings) and cluster *-fš-* of Av. *drafša-* (original meanings) traced back to PIE. **dreb-* (evolved from **der-*3) + **-s-* (viz. **-so-* evolved into *-sa-*) is from ‘original *ps*’.

5. Conclusion

- Origin of cluster -*ps*- of Skr. *drapsá*- ‘drop’ from PIE. **dherebh*- (Pok. 1959, p. 257) / **dhrebh-so*- (Mayrhofer, 1963, pp. 71-72) / reconstructed **dhrabzha*- (Uhlenbeck, 1898/1899, p. 131) is ‘analogical original *ps*’ alternating with ‘analogical *ps*’; unknown origin is unmotivated.
- Cluster -*bzh*- in the reconstructed **dhrabzha*- from **dhrebh*- / **dherebh*- implies **dhrebh-so*-, and it is obtained with the activation of the Bartholomae’s Law: in an environment ‘aspirate -*bh*- + -*s*-’ (= **dhre**bh-s**o*-) the aspiration goes to the last element where it is preserved in Skr. (= **dhra**bzh**a*-), lost in Ir.
- And, in OInd., the group -*bž*- (following the group -*bzh*-) was replaced by -*ps*- (= analogical change), as it is the case with Skr. *dipsa*- ‘seek to deceive’ (< *di-d**bh-s**a*-) (cf. Kellens, ibid.).

5. Conclusion

- Question is: From which model was taken over cluster -*ps*- of Skr. *drapsá*- ‘drop’ (< **dhre**bh-so*-)? Answer should be traced in the **motive** (**reason**) of the analogical change. In circumstances in which Skr. *drapsá*- means also ‘banner’, there is **no** motive for the same Skr. *drapsá*- ‘drop’ to take over cluster -*ps*- from Skr. *dipsa*- ‘seek to deceive’ with an unknown model from which its cluster -*ps*- was taken over (or, eventually, from another unknown model).
- Therefrom, if Skr. *drapsá*- ‘drop’ is from **dhrebh-so*-, then the motivated model from which its cluster -*ps*- was taken over is Skr. *dra**ps**á*- ‘**banner**’. **But** this most reasonable solution for the origin of cluster -*ps*- of Skr. *drapsá*- ‘drop’ from **dhrebh-so*- implies that primarily has evolved meaning ‘banner’ of Skr. *drapsá*-, secondarily its meaning ‘drop’ (*sic!*). This implication **contradicts** the most attested meaning of Skr. *drapsá*-, viz.

5. Conclusion

- Meaning ‘drop’ of Skr. *drapsá-* from PIE. **dherebh-* / **dhrebh-so-* / **dhrabzha-*, meaning ‘banner’ of Skr. *drapsá-* and Av. *drafša-* from PIE. **drep-* is an old etymology of this word. An abundance of evidence brings conclusion that Skr. *drapsá-* and Av. *drafša-* are from PIE. **dreb-* ‘to tremble, quiver’ (evolved from **der-*3 ‘to run’) + *-*s-*, origin of cluster *-ps-* of Skr. *drapsá-* (original meanings) and of cluster *-fš-* of Av. *drafša-* (original meanings) from ‘original *ps*’.
- And there are plenty of still **unelaborated yet resolvable** issues implied in the derivation of clusters *-ps-* and *-fš-* of these two forms from PIE. **dreb-s-*.
- Origin of Av. *drafša-* and Skr. *drapsá-* from PIE. **drep-* ‘to cut’ obstructs their clear origin; in its last consequence, it poses doubts on their traceability to the Indo-European. As such, it